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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PROP](#) [KDEM](#) [RS](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: FM NAZAROV SAYS NGO DRAFT LAW "POSTPONED INDEFINITELY"

REF: A) DUSHANBE 0304 B) OSC CEP200602129007

CLASSIFIED BY: Richard E. Hoagland, Ambassador, EXEC, Embassy
Dushanbe.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (C) At the end of a long meeting February 14 on BBC registration and licensing (ref A), the Ambassador noted to Foreign Minister Nazarov a February 11 press statement (ref B) in which a Ministry of Justice official called for a "law stipulating strict control over activities of NGOs." The Ambassador said it has long been rumored parliament is secretly considering a new "Law on Public Organizations." Now that a government official has made a public statement about it, the time has come to call for parliament to make the draft available for public discussion, as required by Tajik law.

2. (C) Foreign Minister Nazarov bristled and replied, "I saw the press statement, called the Minister of Justice, and told him to tell his people to back off. In fact, the draft is going through multiple revisions and is postponed indefinitely because it has too many gray areas."

BACKGROUND

3. (C) It has been known for several months that a draft "Law on Public Organizations" has been unusually closely held in various parliament committees. In fact, we have a bootleg translation and analysis of one of the more recent drafts.

4. (C) Russian Ambassador Ramazan Abdulatipov has been lobbying the Tajik Government to pass a new NGO law similar to Russia's as a way to prevent "color revolutions." He is further rumored to be pressing against specific Western NGOs. The Tajik

director of the Open Society Institute, who is extremely well connected at high levels of the Tajik Government, told the Ambassador February 2 Abdulatipov had told President Rahmonov, "The sooner you get Soros out of Tajikistan, the better it will be for you."

15. (C) COMMENT: We have no doubt that Russia is putting intense pressure on Tajikistan to limit Western NGO activities. Likewise, we are certain FM Nazarov remains well briefed on the various drafts of the law. Intense government debate continues whether responsibility for registering foreign NGOs should be returned from the hard-line Ministry of Justice to the relatively moderate Foreign Ministry. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND